

LEX IGNEA:  
OR  
The School of Righteousness.

A  
SERMON

Preach'd before the KING,

Octob. 10. 1666.

At the SOLEMN FAST appointed  
For the late  
FIRE in LONDON.

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ISAIAH xxvi. 9.

—When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants  
of the World will learn Righteousness.



His Chapter with the two next before, and that which follows, are all four parts of the same prophetick Sermon, (as appears by those words so often repeated in them, *In that Day*, fixing and determining All to the same *Epoch*, and period of Time;) belong All to the same subject Matter, *sc.* the Destruction of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, whether by the *Babylonians*, or the *Romans*, or both. So that the *Earth* (or as we may rather translate, the *Land*, or the *Countrey*) *wasted, and utterly spoiled, and* V. 1. & 3. *turn'd upside down*, Cap. xxiv. is doubtless the Land of *Jewry*: And the *World that languisheth, and fadeth away*, V. 4 of that Cap. not much wider; that, and the neighbouring Regions, with whom the *Jews* had commerce, and intercourse of Peace and War, *Moab*, and *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, in a word, the *Jewish World*; (for so both the חבל ארץ, & ארץ ישראל Hebrew and Greek words usually translated the *Earth* and קריית תהו the *World*, are often in Scripture-language contracted and limited by the Matter in hand:) And consequently the *City of Confusion*, which is *broken down*, a *City turn'd Chaos* again, as the Hebrew imports, cap. xxiv. 10. the *City turn'd into a Heap*, or a *Ruine*, nay, in *tumulum*, as the *Vulgar Latine*, or *eis χαμα*, as the *LXX.* translate it, into one great *Sepulchre* to it self, buried in its own *Rubbish*, Cap. xxv. 2. The *lofty City laid low, even to the Ground, and abased in the very Dust*. Cap. xxvi. 5. The *City desolate, and forsaken*,  
A 2

*saken, and left Wilderneß, and desert all over, Cap. xxvii. 10.* are but so many variations of the phrase, and signifie all the same thing, the *burning of Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, or *Titus*, or (as some will have it) by both.

This sad Devastation the Prophet first beholds in *speculo prophetico*, sees it from far in his prophetick *Telescope*, as clearly, and distinctly, as if it were before his eyes, and describes it here and there the whole Sermon throughout, but chiefly, Cap. xxiv. in so lofty a Language, that many have mistaken it for the *End* of the World, and the Consummation of all things. But then, to sweeten so sad a Theme, he assures them, it shall not be a *Παρωλεβηλα*, God will not make a final End now: No, a Remnant shall be left, *as the shaking of an Olive-tree, and as the gleaning Grapes, when the Vintage is done, Cap. xxiv. 13.* Nor shall they be only preserved, but restored too; *The Lord God will in time wipe away every Tear from off all Faces, and at last, swallow up this Death too in Victory, Cap. xxv. 8.* Hee'l turn their Captivities, and rebuild their City, and their Temple too; and all this shall be as it were *Life from the Dead*, as the Apostle calls it, so miraculous a Re-establishment, at a Juncture so improbable, when they are destroyed out of all Ken of Recovery, that it shall be a kind of Resurrection; and so like the great One, that 'tis described in the very proper phrases of that, both by the other Prophets, and by Ours too a little below the Text, *Thy Dead shall live again; My dead Bodies shall arise: Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the Dust, &c.* And then, (which is of nearest Concern to us, and to our present Business) the Prophet directs the Remnant that should escape, how to behave themselves under so great a Desolation; and he contrives his directions into a threefold *Song* (that they may be the better remarkt and remembred) tun'd and fitted to the three great Moments of the Event.

The *first*, to the time of the Ruine it self, Cap. xxiv. where

Lacryman  
Vulg.

Rom. xi. 15.

Ezek. xxxvii.  
Dan. xii.

V. 19.



where having set before their Eyes the sad prospect of the holy City, and House of God in Flames; *When thus it shall be in the midst of the Land*, saith he, there shall be a Remnant, and they shall lift up their voice, and sing for the Majesty of the Lord, saying, *Glorifie ye the Lord in the Fires*, V. 15. And this is שיר תהלה a Song of Praise.

The second is שיר מַעֲלוֹת a Song of Degrees or Ascensions, fitted to the time of their Return, when All should be restor'd and rebuilt again; and that we have Cap. xxvii. 2. *In that Day sing ye unto her; A Vineyard of Red Wine: I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*

The third (of which my Text is a principal strain) belongs to the whole middle interval between the Ruine and the Restauration, in this xvi. Cap. *In that day shall this Song be sung in the land of Judah, We have a strong City; Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks*, &c. As if he had said; Though our City be ruin'd, yet God is still our dwelling place; our Fortresses dismantled, and thrown down, but Salvation will he appoint us for Walls and Bulwarks; Our Temples in the Dust, but God will be to us himself, *as a little Sanctuary*. Ezek. xi. 16. And this is שיר מִשְׁכֵּל a Song to give Instruction, teaching them, and in them us, how to demean our selves, while the Calamity lies upon us: *sc. to make God our Refuge*, ver. 4. *to wait for him in the Way of his Judgments*, ver. 8. and in this 9. ver. earnestly *to desire him from the very soul in the Night* (in the Darkest, and Blackest of the Affliction;) *to seek him early*, when it begins to dawn towards a better Condition; and in the mean time, as 'tis in the Text, to improve all this severe Discipline, as he intends it, for the advancing us in the knowledge of Him, and of our selves, and of our whole Duty; *For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.*

A Text you see, that supposeth Judgments in the Earth,

OR

or upon a Land ( as its Occasions ) and so suitable to our sad Condition: a Text too, that proposeth our Learning, as its End and Design, and so suitable ( one would think ) to our Inclination too. The Character, and *Genius* of the Age, we live in, is *Learned*: the pretence at this day so high, and so universal, that He is No-body now, who hath not a new *Système* of the World, a new *Hypothesis* in Nature, a new *Model* of Government, a new *Scheme* of God's Decrees, and the greatest Depths in Theology. We are many of us acute Philosophers ( that must not be disputed us; ) most of us grand Politicks and Statfemen too; All of us ( without exception ) deep Divines: — will needs be wiser than our Neighbours, but however wiser than our Teachers and Governours, if not wiser than God himself. A kind of *Moral Rickets*, that swells, and puffs up the Head, while the whole inner

2 Tim. 3. 6, 7. Man of the Heart wasts and dwindles. For like the *silly Women*, Disciples to the old *Gnosticks*, while we are thus ever learning ( pretending to great Heights, and Proficiencies ) we come never to the Knowledge of the Truth ( the Truth which is according unto Godliness; ) In fine, amongst so many Learners they are but few, that learn Righteousness: — And therefore God himself here opens us a School; erects a severe Discipline in the Text; brings forth his *Ferulas*, when nothing else will serve the Turn. For he hath indeed *four* Schools, or rather four distinct Forms, & Classes in the same great *School of Righteousness*; the last only ( that of his Judgments ) express in the Text, but the Rest too suppos'd at least, or covertly implied.

- For whether we look upon the latter Clause of the proposition. *The Inhabitants of the World will learn*; — We find our selves there under a double Formalitie; As
1. Learners, and as Inhabiters. As Learners first, and so indued with Faculties of Reason; Powers of a Soul capable of Learning, what is to be learned; stampt, and possest with first Principles, & common Notions which deeply search'd, and

and duly improv'd, and cultivated, might teach us Much of Righteousness. And this is *Schola Cordis in Domo interiori*, the School of the Heart, God's first School in the little World within us. Secondly, as Inhabitants of the great World, which is God's School too, as well as his Temple, full of Doctrines and Instructions; *Schola Orbis*, in which, He takes us forth continual Lessons of Righteousness, — *Seque ipsum inculcat, & offert, Ut bene cognosci possit*; and that both from the Natural World, and from the political; whether *Schola Regni*, or *Schola Ecclesiae*. Or if we return to the former Branch of the Text, *When thy Judgments are in the Earth*. This *when they are*, supposeth another time, when they *Are Not* in the Earth, and *that time is the time of Love*, (as the Prophet speaks) *Ezek. xvi. 8.* the Season of Mercy; So that, Thirdly, here's *Schola Misericordiarum*, the School of God's tender Mercies inviting us, gently leading, and *drawing us with the Cords of a Man, with the Bands of Love*: And lastly, when nothing else will serve, here's *Schola Judiciorum*, the School of God's severe Judgments driving us to Repentance, and compelling us to come in and learn Righteousness. A provision (you see) every way sufficient, and abundant for our Learning,, were not we wanting to our selves.

But alas! we may run by the Text, and easily read in it these *three* things, as so many very Natural Deductions, and Emanations from it. First, our own ignorance and Stupidity; *Born like a wilde Ass's Colt*, as *Zophar* speaks; and then to our Natural we add affected Ignorance too: So that we are much to seek, and to learn Righteousness it must be taught us. Secondly, God's infinite, and inexpressible Grace and Mercy to us; that when we had blurr'd the Original, defac'd the first Traces of Righteousness upon our Souls, he was 'pleas'd to provide Expedients to teach it us again the second time, that we might be *renewed unto Knowledge after the Image of him, that created us in Righteousness*, as the Apostle speaks

2.

3

Hof. xi. 4.

4.

1.

Jo b. xi. 12.

2.

Col. iii. 10.

Ephes. iv. 24.

3.

speaks. And Thirdly, Our indocible and unteachable Humour, our foul and shameful Non-proficiency under so plentiful a Grace. For though the Text indeed speaks of our learning Righteousness, when God's Judgments are upon us; yet (if the Appearances of the World abroad suggested nothing to the contrary) 'tis introduc'd here in the Text too, as the Effect of the last Form in God's School, in exclusion of all the former as ineffectual; his utmost Method not to be used but at a pinch, when all the rest are baffled, and prove improsperous upon us: And then 'tis express'd in the Original, and learned *Versions* with so many Limitations and Abatements (as we shall see by and by) that we may well give it up as the sum and upshot of all, that our All-merciful God omits no Means or Methods of our Improvement; but we (supinely negligent, and prodigiously stubborn as we are) render them all ineffectual.

That we may do so no longer, but rather make good the profession, with which we have dar'd to appear this Day before God, of humbling our selves under his Almighty Hand; Let us, before we pass on any further, lift up our Hands and our Hearts to Him in the Heavens, beseeching him by the Power of his Mighty Grace so to sanctifie to us All, both the Sense of his present Judgment, and all our Meditations and Discourses thereupon, that by all we may be promoted in learning Righteousness.

**T**He Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness or Justice: What's that? Is there such a thing in the World? Or is it a Name onely, and a glorious pretence? Is it not only another word for *Interest* or Utility, and so nothing just, but what is profitable; *Carneades* his infamous Assertion retriv'd and own'd with open face by Christians? Is it not the taking of a party, or the espousing of a Faction, and appearing for it with heat and animosity; and a savage condemning and destroying All that are not of it? Is it not the Profession to believe such a

*System*

a *System* of Opinions, what life soever is consequent thereupon? an airy invisible Righteousness, that never embodies or appears in our Actions, but hovers in the Clouds, in speculations and fancies, where no Man can find it?

The Truth is, there is no piece of Unrighteousness more common in the World, than thus to weigh Justice it self in an unjust Ballance; while every one contrives his *Hypothesis*, so as to save the *Phænomena*, so declares his Notion, as may best suit and comport with his own unrighteous practices. But the Righteousness we are to learn in God's School, must not be a self-chosen Righteousness: We must not pay God our Sovereign, the Tribute of our Obedience in Coyn of our own stamping; it must be such as will abide the Touchstone of his Word, and the Balance of his Sanctuary. To make short, Righteousness or Justice, though elsewhere a single Virtue, yet here 'tis virtually All: — Συμβέβηκε πᾶσι ἀρεταῖς ἑ, said the Poet; and the Philosopher after him, 'Ου μέρῳ ἀρετῆς, ἀλλ' ὅλη ἀρετὴ ἔστιν, not a part, but all Virtue: and so often both in Scripture, and Fathers, comprehensively all Religion, the whole Duty of Man. ἡ τῶν ἐπιτολῶν ἐκπλήρωσις, *Theogn.* saith S. Chrysostome: *Omnes Virtutum species uno Justitiæ Ethic. v. 1.* nomine, saith S. Jerome. Not a particular Star, nor a single Constellation, but a whole Heaven of Vertues, an entire Globe of Moral and Christian Perfections; an Universal Rectitude of the Will, conforming us in all Points to *Hon. 12. in* God's Righteous Law, the Rule of our Righteousness, *S. Matth.* Or if you will in two words, 'tis *Summ* *cuique* to give every one his Due; *Summ Deo* first, and then *Summ proximo*; give God his Due, and your Neighbour too: These are the integral parts of it. So that Righteousness, as the great Rule of it, hath two Tables, or, if you will two *Hemispheres*, the upper and the nether: Both so vast, that we cannot measure them in a Span (the Span of time allotted me;) I shall therefore contract them to the occasion, and give you only some of those particular Les-

sons of Righteousness, which this present Judgment of God upon our Land seems most clearly to take us forth, both in relation to God himself, and to our Neighbours; and then call you, and my self to a serious Scrutiny, how well we have learn'd them, and so an end.

C. xxiv. 15. And first we begin (as we ought) in giving God his due; in rendring to God the things that are Gods. To limit this wide Universality too, and render it more proper, and peculiar, we may reduce all to that first of *Ezai's* three Songs mention'd at the beginning, *Glorifie ye the Lord in the Fires*; giving him upon this sad Occasion the Glory of that great Trinity of his Attributes; the Glory of his Power, and Majesty; the Glory of his Justice and Equity; the Glory of his Goodness and Mercy.

1. Give him the Glory of his Power and Greatness; which the Prophet calls, *singing for the Majesty of the Lord*, Cap. xxiv. 15. or *beholding the Majesty of the Lord, when his Hand is lifted up*, in the verse after my Text. How great and glorious our God is, who is in himself incomprehensible, appears best by the glorious greatness of his Works. If he builds, it is a World, Heaven and Earth, and the Fulness of both. If he gives, it is his only Son out of his Bosom, the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person. If he rewards, 'tis a Crown, 'tis a whole Heaven of Glories. If he be angry, he sends a deluge; opens the Cataracts of Heaven above, and breaks up the Fountains of the great Deep below, and pours forth whole Flouds of Vengeance: Or else he rains down Hell out of Heaven, and in a moment turns a Land like the Garden of God into a dead Sea, and a lake of Brimstone. If he discover himself by any overt expression of his Power, though the Intention be meer Mercy, and loving Kindness, Mortality shrinks from it, and cannot bear it. When his Glory descends on Mount *Sinai*, the people remove, and stand afar off, and *Let not God speak with us* (say they) *lest we die: and Depart from me, O Lord,* faith

Salvian.

Ex. xx. 18, 19.



saith S. Peter. amaz'd at that miraculous draught of Fish. Luc. v. 8.  
 es: How much more should the Inhabitants of the World  
 tremble before him, when his great and sore Judgments  
 are in the Earth: Tremble thou Earth, the presence of God  
 (saith the Psalmist) even when he improves the hard Rock Pf. cxiv. 7, 8.  
 into a Springing Well: much more when a fruitful Land Pf. cvii. 34.  
 he turns into barrenness, or a stately City into Ashes, for  
 the wickedness of them that dwell therein. I am horribly  
 afraid, saith David, for the ungodly that forsake thy Law; Pf. cxix. 53.  
 and I exceedingly fear, and quake, said Moses, at the giving of it: But when our Lord shall come again to require it, The Powers of Heaven shall be shaken too; the Hebr. xii. 21.  
 Angels themselves (as S. Chrysostom interprets) though Marth. xxiv.  
 pure and innocent Creatures shall tremble (*ὀκνήσουσι*) to 29.  
 see the severity of that Judgment. How much rather Hom. 77.  
 ought we, wretched Creatures that we are, conscious to in Marth.  
 our selves, of Dust, and Sin, to tremble and quake at the  
 Wrath of this dread Lord of the Universe; at whose  
 Voice alone, the great Emporour Caligula runs under Sueton. l. v.  
 the Bed, and the mighty Belshazzar's Loins are loosed, n. 51.  
 and his knees knock one against another, when God but Dan. v. 6.  
 writes bitter things against him on the Wall.

• It were a vain Affectation, to attempt a Description  
 of the greatness of our late horrible Devastation. This  
 were to be *Ambitiosus in Malis*, to chew over all our  
 Wormwood, and our Gall again: This were *Rogum ascia*  
*polire*, which the xii. TABLES forbade, to carve and paint  
 the wood of our Funeral pile. I shall only call back your  
 thoughts to stand with me upon the prospect of that hor-  
 rid Theatre of the divine Judgments, and say, Come li-  
 ther, and behold the Works of the Lord, what Desolation he  
 hath made in the Earth; and then who will not joyn with  
 me to say upon so convincing an occasion? We humble  
 our selves under the Almighty Hand of God, the Lord  
 of all the World; We adore his Power and Majesty in  
 lowly prostrations; before whom all the Nations of the

Pf. xlv. 2.



- Isai. xl. 15. World are as a *Drop of the Bucket*, the Globe of the Earth as the *small Dust* of the *Balance*, and who taketh up the Isles (even our Great *Britains* too, as we call them) as a very little thing. Great and marvelous are thy Works,
- Apoc. xv. 3, 4. O Lord God Almighty! who would not fear thee, and glorify thy Name, when thy Judgments are thus manifest? Thou hast brought them down that dwell on high, and laid the lofty City low, even to the Ground; the Joyous City of our Solemnities, the Royal Chamber, the Emporium of the World, the Mart of Nations, the very Top Gallant of all our Glory in the Dust. Even so Holy Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. We say not to our God, What do'st thou? Wherefore hath the Lord done thus to this great City? we reply not, we answer not again: The Lord hath spoken; let all the Earth keep silence before him. We acknowledg thy Hand in it, O our God; we submit to thy good pleasure in it; we wait for thy Comfort, and thy Salvation in it. We meekly kiss the Rod that strikes us: With dying Jacob we desire to worship *ὁν τὸ ἄχρον ἔπελδεν*, with perfect Resignation as we are able, leaning and reposing upon the top of this thy severe Rod. For shall we receive Good at the hand of our God, and shall we not receive Evil? 'Tis the same Blessed Hand that distributes and strikes; and with equal Reverence and Affection we adore it, whether he opens it wide in Bounty, or contracts it close in severity: The one the Divine Rhetorick to perswade us to learn Righteousness; the other his more irrefragable Logick to convince and constrain us. And therefore, we charge not our Maker foolishly; but meekly accept the punishment of our Iniquity. And having thus ador'd his Power (which was the First) we go on in the next place to acknowledg his Justice too; saying with holy DAVID, Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy Judgments: The second part of God's Due. Give him the Glory of his Justice also; and if you learn no other Righteousness in his School, at least learn His,

His, and frankly confess it too. For though God's Judgments may be secret, yet they cannot be unjust: *Like the great Deep* indeed, an *Abyss* unfathomable; But though we have no Plumb-line of Reason, that can reach it, our Faith assures us, there's Justice at the Bottom. *Clouds and Darknes are round about him*, saith the *Pf. xxxvi. 6.* *Pf. xvii. 2.* *Pfalmist*; but, as it follows, *Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne*: So much we may easily discern through all the Veils and Curtains that envelop him, that Justice stands always fast by his Judgment-seat. And therefore though it be a nice, and a delicate point to assign the particular sins, for which God hath thus sorely afflicted us; yet must we declare (as we are warranted by sacred Authority) *That God hath laid his heavy Judgment upon us All, as an Evidence of his Displeasure for our Sins in general.* *The King's Declaration.*

Not to engage in that Common Theme; we may clear it a little by the Light of our own *Fires*, (the particular Instrument of our Calamity) in two or three Reflections upon that. God spake his Righteous Law at first out of the midst of the *Fire*, *Exod. xix. 18.* And he shall appear from Heaven again in flaming *Fire*, taking vengeance on them that obey it not, saith the Apostle. Now as the Prophet *Amos* argues from another circumstance of Terrour, wherewith the Law was given, the sound of the Trumpet (the first Trumpet certainly, we ever read of in any Record in the World, as the last Trumpet (the Apostle tells us) shall be that of the Arch-angel to summon us to account for it) *Shall a Trumpet be blown* *1 Cor. 15. 52.* *Amos iii. 6.* (and so say I, shall a *Fire* be kindled) *in the City* (nay, a whole City become but one great Fire) *and the people not be afraid*; We not reflect upon our own Guiltiness before God, who came at first with a *Fiery Law in his Right Hand* to teach us our Duty, and shall come again at last with *Fiery Indignation* at his left to devour all those that perform it not? Again, Fire and Water are the two great

2 Pet. iii. 6, 7.

great Instruments of God's double Vengeance upon the World of the Ungodly: The One long since past recorded for our Instruction; the Other yet to come, the Matter (it ought to be, I am sure) of our continual Terror. *The World that then was, perished by Water (saith S. Peter) and the World that is now, is reserv'd unto Fire:* In the mean time, Fire and Water, things of commonest Use with us, are also the standing Metaphors almost in every verse of Scripture, to express God's Judgments of all sorts: Is it not on purpose to remind us, when ever we hear the sound, or make use of the things, or feel the smart of either, to reflect upon the heavy wrath of God against Sin in his so solemn expressions of it? Once more, Fire is the *Tyrant* in Nature, the *King* of the Elements, the mighty *Nimrod* in the Material World. God hath given us this Active Creature for our Servant, and we degrade him to the meanest Offices, to the Drudgery of the Kitchen, and the labour of the Furnace. But God can infranchise him when he pleases, and let him loose upon us; and for our sins, of an useful Servant, make him to us a rigorous, and a Tyrannical Master. You saw him the other Day, when he escaped from all your Restraints, mockt all your Resistance, scorn'd the Limits, you would have set him: Wing'd with our Guilt, he flew triumphant over our proudest Heights, waving his curl'd Head, seeming to repeat us that Lesson which holy S. Austin taught us long since, *That the inferiour Creatures serve us Men, only that we may serve him, who made both us and them too.* If we rebel against Heaven, *Συνεπιδημιώσει ὁ Κόσμος*, saith the Wiseman; *The World shall rise in Arms upon us, and fight with him against the Unwise.* Even the Holy Fires of the Altar too, though kindled from Heaven on purpose to propitiate an angry Deity, prov'd often through Man's provocations the Instruments of his Fury; the *Mercy-seat* became the Arsenal of Vengeance, and from the presence of God himself went forth those Flames that

Wisd. v. 20.

that devour'd his Adversaries? And all to teach us this Lesson, That 'tis Sin puts the Thunder into God's Hand, and turns Flames of Love into a consuming Fire.

And therefore dream no longer of *Granado's* or *Fire-Balls*, or the rest of those witty Mischiefs; search no more for *Boutefiens* or *Incendiaries*, *Dutch* or *French*: The Dutch Intemperance, and the French Pride and Vanity, and the rest of their Sins, we are so fond off, are infinitely more dangerous to us, than the Enmity of either Nation; for these make God our Enemy too. Or if you'll needs find out the Incendiary, look not abroad; *Intus hostis, intus periculum*, saith St. Jerome. Turn your Eyes inward into your own Bosoms; there lurks the great Make-bate, the grand *Boutefiou* between Heaven and us. Trouble not your selves with *Planetary Aspects*, or great *Conjunctions*; but for your own Oppositions direct and Diametral to God, and his Holy Law. Fear not the Signs of Heaven, but the Sins on Earth, which hath made a separation between you and your God. 'Tis injurious to the sweet Influences of the Stars, to charge them with such dire Effects, as Wars, and Pestilences and Conflagrations: *Divinae Justitiae opera haec, sunt* (saith the Father) *& humane injustitiae*. These are the Products of God's Righteousness upon our Unrighteousness. Wherefore glorifie we God in these our Fires, saying with the Prophet, *Righteousness belongs to thee, O Lord, but unto us confusion of Faces, as it is this day, because of our manifold Trespases that we have trespassed against thee.*

Dan. ix. 24

If yet it be expected I should be more particular, in assigning the very Sins that have occasion'd this heavy Judgment, 'tis a slippery place, and hard to keep firm footing in it. The mysterious Text of God's Holy Providence (as I said before) is dark and obscure; and so much the more, because there are so many Interpreters, (for though there be no infallible Judge of the Sense of it, yet all Fingers itch to be doing;) their Conjectures so various,

2 Pet. iii. 16.

Prov. xviii. 17.

Cap. xxiv. 2.

Cap. ix. 32, 33.

various, and full of contradiction, so tainted and debauched with private prejudice, that they do but *ερεβλῶν*, wrest it unskilfully, as they do the other holy Text, *Convertunt in mentem suam* (as the *Æthiopick* turns that place in St. Peter) torture, and torment it, till it confess their own Sense. As for the many spiteful and unrighteous *Glosses* upon the sad Text of our present Calamity (on which every Faction amongst us hath a *Revelation*, hath an *Interpretation*; ) I will not mention, much less imitate them. *Iustus Accusator sui*, saith the *Wiseman*. 'Tis a righteous thing for every Man to suspect himself, to look first into the plague of his own Heart, and to be ready to say with the Disciples, *Master, Is it not I?* We are all over apt to charge one another foolishly enough; to take St. Peter's counsel, *ἰλασμός σου*, to be kind and favourable to our selves in our Interpretations and Censures; but God methinks, at present seems to accuse us All.

When a Judgment is particular and reacheth but a few, we have a savage promptness in condemning the Sufferers, with, *This is God's just Judgment for such a thing*, which we, it seems like not, though perhaps God himself doth. So long as the Thunder-bolt flies over our own Heads, we hug our selves, and All is well; 'tis our dear pastime, and a high voluptuousness to sit and censure others, and flatter our selves, that we are more righteous than they. To meet with this ill Humour, God hath reacht us now an universal stroke that comes home to every Man: So that 'tis as our Prophet states it in the beginning of this *Sermon*, *As with the Prince and the Priest*, (for *Ἰσραὴλ* is both) *so with the people, as with the Master, and the Mistress, so with the Servant, as with the Buyer, and the Borrower, so with the Seller and the Lender*. In fine, He is no Englishman that feels not this Blow: And therefore as the Judgment is Universal, let us give Glory to God, and confess, that the Sin is so too; saying with the good *Nehemiah*, *Thou art just, O God, in All that is brought*

upon

upon us; on our King, and on our Princes; on our Priests, and on our Prophets; on our Fathers, and on all thy People; For thou hast done Right, but we have All done Wickedly. God give us Grace to take every one the shame that belongs properly to himself, and to joyn heartily together in a full *Chorus* at the last, repeating that excellent *Exomologesis* of holy *David*, with which I began this point, and shall now conclud it, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy Judgments.* But there is another yet behind.—

Lastly, give God the Glory of his Mercy too; that must in no wise be forgotten. 'Tis the priviledge and prerogative of Mercy, that it mixeth it self in all God's Works; even in Justice it self too. He sendeth forth *Lightnings with the Rain* (saith the *Psalmist*) he bringeth the *Winds out of his Treasuries*. Strange Furniture, one would think for a Treasury, Storms and Tempests! But there is so very much of Mercy even in God's Judgments too, that they also deserve a place amongst his Treasures, ay and amongst ours too. For he licenseth not a Wind, or a Storm, lets not fly a flash of Lightning, or a Ball of Fire, but a Mercy goes along with it; comes flying to us (if we miss it not by our Negligence or Inadvertency) upon the Wings of that Wind; and discovers it self to us even by the Light of those Fires. And therefore turn not away your Eyes in Horror, but study the late *Conflagration*: And even in the Dust and Ashes of our City, if we sift and examine them well, we may find rich Treasures of Mercy hidden.

Mercy first, that God spar'd us, and preserv'd us so long. For without his Divine Manutenency, our strongest Fabricks had faln immediately upon their very Builders, He that made all things at first, by preserving makes them still; new makes them every Moment; and for his Will's sake alone they were and are created. He carries Nature alwayes in his Bosom, fostering and cherishing  
C her;

3.  
S. Ambrose,  
Suo jure omni-  
bus Dei operi-  
bus superingre-  
ditur & super-  
natat.  
Pl. CXXXV. 7.



her; and that not only as she came out of his own hand, and bears the Impresses of his Infinite Wisdom and Power; but as we have transform'd and disguis'd her by our petty skill; as she is fettered and shackled by our silly Artifices: Even the World of Fancy too, the poor Attempts and Bunglings of Art, our Houses of Dirt and Clay (which we call Palaces and so please our selves in) would quickly fall asunder, and moulder all into the Dust they consist of, did not an Almighty Hand uphold them. If he keep not the House and the City, in vain the Builder builds, and the Watchman wakes, and the Centinel stands *perdu*. And therefore give we him the Glory of this Mercy, saying *Thanks be to the Lord, who so long shew'd us marvellous great Kindness*, I say not with the *Psalms*, in a strong City, (though the strongest without him is weakness) but in a very weak One: A City in the Meanness of the Materials, the Oldness of the Buildings, the streightness of some Streets, the ill Situation of others, and many like Inconveniencies, so expos'd to this dismal Accident, that it must needs have been long since in Ashes, had not his miraculous Mercy preserv'd it, who, so long as he pleaseth (and that is just so long as we please Him) continues the Fire to us useful and safe, serviceable, and yet innocent, with as much ease as he lays it asleep, and quiet in the Bosom of a Flint.

Pl. xxxi. 23.

2.

Pl. xciv. 12.

Ἡ μετ' αὐτὴν κτί-  
σις ὅτι δὲ ἀμαρ-  
τανῶν, καὶ μὴ  
καταζεύξεται.

Pl. lxxxii. 13.

Mercy again, That he afflicts us at all; that we are yet in his School; that he hath not quite given us over, and turn'd us out as unteachable and incorrigible. *Felix cui Deus dignatur irasci*, saith Tertullian; in *David's* Language *Blessed is the Man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him in thy Law; send't him thy Judgments, and learn't him thy Righteousness*. But to sin, and not be punisht, is the forest punishment of all, saith *S. Chrysostome*. *Dimisit eos secundum desideria Cordis*, He suffer'd them to walk after their own Hearts's Lusts, that's a dreadful portion:

Let



Let them alone, *Why should they be stricken any more?* Isai. i. 5.  
 that's the prosperity of Fools that destroys them, as Solomon; Prov. i. 32.  
 or as David phraseth it; This is for God to rain Snares  
 upon the ungodly: A horrible Tempest indeed! as he there  
 calls it, and worse than the Fire and Brimstone in the  
 same Verse. Ps. xi. 6.

Mercy too, That he afflicts us himself, keeps us still  
 under his own Discipline, and hath not yet given us o- 3.  
 ver unto the Will of our Adversaries. The hand of an E- Ps. xxvii. 14.  
 nemy poysons the Wound: His Malice or his Insolence  
 doubles and trebles the Vexation. The Malignity of the  
 Instrument may invenom a Scratch into a Gangrene. But  
 the Blessed Hand of God, even when it strikes, drops Bal-  
 som. His very Rods are bound up in Silk and Softness,  
 and dipt before hand in Balm: He wounds that he may  
 heal, and in wounding heals: *Una, eademque Manus*  
*Vulnus, opemque*— And therefore may we never be  
 beaten by the hand of a cruel and insulting Slave: But  
 let our Righteous Lord himself smite us, and it shall be a Ps. cxll. 5.  
 Kindness; let him correct us, and it shall be an excellent Oyl.  
 O let us still fall into the Hands of God (for great are 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.  
 his Mercies) but let us not fall into the hands of Men.

Mercy lastly in the Degree of the Affliction; That he 4.  
 hath punisht us less than our Iniquities deserve; afflicted  
 us in measure; corrected us in Judgment, not in his Fu-  
 ry, for then we had been utterly brought to nothing:  
 That we have had our Lives for a Prey, and are as so  
 many Fire-brands pluckt out of the Burning. And there-  
 fore, why should a living Man complain? Say we rather  
 as Abraham did in the Case of Sodom, when he had that  
 horrible Scene of Vengeance now in his Eye, *We are but* Gen. xviii. 27.  
*Dust and Ashes:* Not only Dust in the course of ordina-  
 ry Frailty, but Ashes too in the merit of a far sharper  
 Doom; deserve, that God should bring us to Dust, nay,  
 even turn us to Ashes too, as our Houses. *It is of the* Lam. iii. 22.  
*Lord's Mercies, that We our selves also are not consumed,*  
 because

because his compassions fail not; that any part of our City is still remaining; that God hath left us yet a holy place to assemble in, solemnly to acknowledge (as we do this Day) his most miraculous Mercy: That when all our Wit was puzzl'd, and all our Industry tir'd out; when the Wind was at the highest, and the Fire at the hottest, and all our hopes were now giving up the Ghost, Then He, whose season is our greatest extremity; He, who stayeth his rough Wind in the Day of the East-wind, as 'tis in the next Chapter; He, who alone sets Bounds to the Rage of the Waters; restrain'd also on the suddain, the Fury of this other merciless and unruly Element, by the Interposition of his Almighty *Hucusque*, hitherto shalt thou go, and no further. Ay this deserves indeed to be the Matter of a Song, Joy in the Lord upon so great an Occasion, upon so noble an Experience, sits not unhand-some on the Brow of so sad a Day as this is. *It shall be said in that Day*, saith our Prophet, and let us all say it; say it with Triumph, and Jubilee too,) *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and He hath saved us; This is the Lord, we will be glad, and rejoyce in his Salvation: —The third and last part (we shall mention) of God's Due, the Glory of his Mercy.*

2. And now having thus clear'd and secur'd the Fountain of Righteousness, in the Discharge of some part of our Duty to God (where regularly it must begin;) it remains, *Ut ducatur Rivus Justitiæ de fonte Pietatis*, as St. Gregory speaks: It must not be a Fountain seal'd or shut up within it self; (Religion is not, as some would have it, a *Supersedeas* to Common Honesty; the performing our Duty towards God, no Discharge of our Duty to Man: ) In the next place it should *run down like a River*, in mighty Streams of Righteousness to all our Neighbours round about us; the other great Branch, the second Table, or (if you will) the other *Hemisphere* in this great Globe  
of

Cap. xxvii. 2.

Cap. xxv. 9.

Amos. v. 24.

of Righteousness. And here, *Ecce novae Hyadas, alim-  
que Oriona*—— So many new Asterisms and Constellati-  
ons of Vertues appear, that the time will not give leave  
to number them, or call them all by their Names: I can on-  
ly touch lightly the greater Circles, some of the more  
comprehensive Lines and Measures of them in these few  
Generals, and so pass on.

'Tis Righteousness Indefinitely *First*, and so Univer-  
sally. So that 'twill not be sufficient to take forth some  
part of it in God's School, a line or two, it may be, of  
our great Lesson, and neglect the Rest; to study some one  
Page or Paragraph, and tear all the Book besides; to  
break the Tables (to far worse Effect than *Moses* did )  
and content our selves with some sorry Fragment: No,  
What ever goes under the common style of Universal Ju-  
stice; whatever falls within the large Bosom of that com-  
prehensive *Epitome*, into which our Lord himself abridg'd  
the Law and the Prophets, *All things whatsoever ye would* March. vii. 12.  
*that men should do to you, do even so to them;* Whatever  
comes within compass of that *Νόμος* Βασιλικός, as *S. James* Jam. ii. 8.  
calls it, *the Royal Law*, ( the latter part of the holy *Insti-  
tutes*, the other tome of the Christian *Pandeets*, the second  
great Commandment like the first, as our Saviour styles it )  
*Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self;* Even all the Off-  
ices and Instances of duty between man & man ; (Reverence March. xxii.  
and Obedience to our Superiors, Courtesie and Human-  
ity to our Equals; Kindness and Condescension to our In-  
feriours; Gratitude and Thankfulness to our Benefactors;  
Justice and Upright-dealing towards All; Truth in our  
Words, and Faithfulness in our Trusts, and Constancy to  
our Promises, and Candor, and Sincerity and Honesty in all  
our Actions: And yet further and higher, for 'tis a Righte-  
ousness improv'd & heightned, or at least interpreted by our  
Lord into *Love*, and so obligeth us beyond the strict Mea-  
sures of Common Justice, and not only renders, what is  
legally due, but gives and forgives beyond it;) Equity  
and

and Moderation to those, that are any way crotchious to us; Mildness and Gentleness to those that have any way offended us; Sympathy and Compassion towards them that suffer; Mercy and Bounty to them that need; Goodness and Peaceableness, and Charity to all the World:) These are all parts of this great Lesson, and whatever else may help to denominate us *The Righteous Nation that keepeth the Truth* (as 'tis in the second verse of this Chapter) or *the City in which dwells Righteousness*.

2.

Pl. cxix. 96.

But then as 'tis Righteousness indefinitely, (*the Commandment exceeding broad*, as *David* speaks, wide in the Extension; so is it also as deep in the Intension,) 'tis Righteousness *Internally* and *Spiritually* too; as being a Righteousness taught us by God's, and not by Mans Judgments only, and consequently must have an Effect proportionable: 'Tis when *Thy* Judgments are in the Earth, Men will learn — As the *Jews*, while *their fear towards God was taught them by the precepts of Men*, drew near to him, and honoured him with their Mouth only, but removed their Hearts far away from him, *Isai. xxix. 13.* Upon the same Ground, our Righteousness will never exceed the Righteousness of Scribes, and Pharisees Hypocrites, must needs prove Noise, and appearance only, a meer and vain Semblance, if we learn it in no higher School than Mans; take it forth from the *XII Tables* only, not from the *Two*, and have no other Tutor in it than *Solon*, or *Lycurgus*, or *Justinian*. For the Derivation can return no higher than the Fountain-head; and what is taught us only by the *Statutes of Omri*, or at *Cæsar's Judgment-seat*, will never come up to what the perfect Law of God requires. While we are under this lower and external Discipline only, if we can but skulk and shift, and play least in sight, and seem to be Righteous, though we are not so; *Redi in Curia*, though not *upright in Heart*: Or if we be discovered and impleaded too, if we can, whether by Power or Artifice, break through the venerable Cobweb, and run under the miserable

miserable shelter of a Temporal Indemnity at these lower Bars: Why, All is well; with *Solomon's* Wanton we wipe Prov. XXX. 25 our Mouths, and are suddenly very Virgins again, not only safe, but innocent too. But though Humane Laws exact only outward Compliances, assume not to themselves to judge the Heart, because they cannot discern it, nor take Cognizance of secret Thoughts and Purposes, farther than they are declar'd by overt Acts: Yet God is a Spirit, and a Discerner of the inmost Thoughts and Intentions; and his Law Spiritual too, and given to the Spirit; and the Righteousness taught in his School, is not a Carcase, or an Outside only, but a living Soul, and a Spirit of Righteousness: and by consequence it stays not in the outward Act, (the proper Object of Humane Laws and Provisions;) restrains not only open violences (such as the Judgment-seat of Man condemns, and the Scaffold, or the Gibbet take notice of;) not only smooths and polisheth the outward Garb, to render that plausible in the eyes of the World: But goes yet further and deeper, even to the Heart; composeth the whole Inner-Man too, and labours to approve that to the Righteous Judge, who sees not as Man sees; and in fine, calls us up to that glorious height of the Primitive Christians in *Justin Martyr*, who obey'd indeed the Municipal Laws of their Countrey, but out-liv'd them too, and surmounted them far, *Tous biens idéens victorieux des vices*, as he speaks; they contented not themselves with so scant Measures, but flew a higher and a nobler pitch, aiming at a more rein'd and perfect Righteousness, the worthy Effect of God's Judgments, and not of Mans only; taught in his School alone, and not at our Tribunals. And then,

Lastly, 'Tis Righteousness *Politically* and *Affirmatively* too. For though the Decalogue is almost all over *Negative* in the Style and Form of it; yet, our Lord, by reducing all the Precepts of it to one *Affirmative* (*Love*,) and also by his *Affirmative* Glosses or Additions to it in his

Sermon.

*Sermon on the Mount*, seems to have authoris'd the Rule of their Exposition, receiv'd generally by Christian Divines, *That the Negative still infers the Affirmative*, and that there are many *Yeas* conceal'd in the Bosom of every such *No*. So that however 'tis indeed a part of our Duty, not to Murther, and not to Slander, and not to Covet, and the like, (an Obligation consequent upon God's prohibition; and he takes it well, when for his sake we abstain from the Evil we are inclin'd or strongly solicited to, and so accepts graciously our very *Nothing*, as I may call it, our *not doing* amiss; thus giving us leave to inclose, as it were, a part of our Waste, and to raise some Revenue upon it:) Yet this is so much short of the Height of the Lesson we are to learn in God's School, that 'tis only the unlearning something that might obstruct it; so far from making us truly *Righteous*, that it can only style us *Innocent*, and set us *Extra vitia* rather than *Intra virtutem*. We must not then content our selves with a *Negative* Righteousness; nor confine, and limit it within the sorry Bounds of the Pharisaical Boast, *That we are not, as other Men are, Extortioners or Unjust*: In some Cases he is unjust too, that gives not his own; as well as he that takes away what is anothers: In the Sacred Dialect, Alms-deeds are Justice too; even Acts of Mercy, and Bounty to those that need them, *stricti Juris*, a part of our Righteousness sometimes so indispensable, as not to be omitted without Sin. And therefore glorifie thy self no longer, that thou do'st harm to no Man:

Luc. xxiii. 11.

Pf. cxii. 9.

Isai. lviii. 7, 8.

Juvenal. Sat.  
xiv.

—Cum dicis stultum, qui donat Amico,  
Qui paupertatem levat, attollitque propinqui,  
Et spoliare doces—

2 Cor. vii. 2.

could the Heathen Poet say:  
He robs his neighbour, that relieves him not: He spoils his Friend, that in some Cases doth not supply him. And though 'tis well (a good Degree) if we can say with S. Paul, *I have wronged no Man*; yet he only is perfectly blameless in this kind, *Qui ne in eo quidem ulli noceat, quo prodesse desistat*,



*desistat*, as S. Jerome excellently; who doth not this Evil to his Neighbour, that he omits to do him all the good he can. Thou didst not burn thy Neighbours house, (a strange piece of uncouth Righteousness!) But dost thou receive him into thy own, now he is harborless? Thou hast not oppress'd, or impoverish'd thy Brother; 'Tis well: But is thy Abundance the Supply of his *Want* in this present exigent? thy Superfluity the Ransom and Redemption of his extream Necessities? If not, remember, that *Dives* is in torments, not for robbing *Lazarus*, but for not relieving Sin: And the dreadful Decretory Sentence proceeds at the last Day, not for oppressing the Poor, but for not feeding, not cloathing, not visiting them: A Reflection very common indeed; yet never more proper or seasonable than at this time, when God presents us an Object of Charity, the greatest, I think, and the most considerable that was ever offer'd to this Nation, and when Heaven and Earth expect, that something extraordinary should be done.

Lib i. Epist. 14.  
ad Celantiam.

Matth. xxxv.

I have now opened the Book, and laid it before you, and given you a short Draught of this very important Lesson: a Lesson so considerable, that our Wise and Good God thinks it worth the while to rout Armies, and sink Navies; to burn up Cities, and turn Kingdoms upside down; to send Wars, and Plagues, and Conflagrations amongst us; to set open all his Schools, and ply all his severest Methods to teach it us the more effectually. Think now, that he looks down this Day from Heaven to take Notice of our Proficiency; to see how far we are advanc'd by these his Judgments in learning Righteousness. And is it possible, we should stand out any longer? Can we still resist so powerful a Grace? Are not the parts of the Text by this time, happily met together? and the Truth of it accomplish'd, and exemplified in us to the full? — Gods Judgments on us, and his Righteousness in us? Who would not think and hope so? But as S. Jerome

D

complains



complains of his Age (which was indeed very calamitous) *Orbis Romanus ruit, & tamen Cervix nostra non flectitur*: The World sinks and cracks about our Ears, and yet our Neck as stiff, and the Crest of our Pride as lofty, and as erect as ever. How few are they that repent in Dust and Ashes, even Now, that God hath laid our City in Dust, and our Houses in Ashes! Look we first upon the Text, and then upon our selves, and we must ingenuously acknowledge, that whatever Abatements or Diminutions to the Height of the design'd event of God's Judgments upon us the Text, or any *Version* of it note, or imply, our wretched evil Lives do but too plainly express and justify. For——

I. Who are they that are said here to learn Righteousness in the Text? Not always the Afflicted themselves, it seems; but some others that stand by and look on. For 'tis not to be omitted, that the phrase manifestly varies in the parts of the Proposition: *Judgments in the Earth*, or upon the Land, some particular Countrey; and *the World* at large, or some few in it *learn Righteousness*. Thus *Tyrus shall be devour'd with Fire*, saith the Prophet: *Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza and Ekron shall be very sorrowful*: But not a word how *Tyrus* her self is affected. God forbid it should be so with us! May it never be said, that any of our neighbors make better use of our calamities, than we our selves! Have we any so hard-hearted amongst us, that can look upon so sad a Spectacle, as if they sat all the while in the Theater, or walkt in a Gallery of Pictures; little more concern'd, than at the Siege of *Rhodes*, or the Ruines of *Troy*? Shall any Neighbour-City say wisely — *Mea res agitur, jam proximus ardet Ucalegon*——? Shall our enemies themselves (the sober and the Wise amongst them, at the least) tremble at the Relation, and we continue stupid, and senseless? Shall *Constantinople* and *Alexandria* resent it, and we not regard it as we ought? Nay, shall *China* and *Pern* (it may be) *Su-*

rat and Mexico, both the Indies hear, and be affected with it, and we our selves insensible? Shall the Inhabitants of the World abroad warm themselves at our Fires, with kindly and holy Heats; while in the mean time our Repentings are not kindled, nor our Charity inflam'd, and our Devotion as cold and frozen as ever? Shall our Mountain (which we said in our jolly pride should never be removed) be fulminated, and thunder-strook, but the Blessed shower, that follows, the Instruction, that descends after, like the Rain, slide off to the Vallies, to Others, that are round about us? Our Lord wept over Jerusalem, because she knew not then (at forty years distance) the time of her Visitation; for the Days will come, saith He, when there shall not be left one stone upon another: But Wo is me! Our Day is come already, and our Visitation now actually upon us; and yet I fear, we will not know it, as we ought. For——

Luc xix.  
41.

2. Reflect a little upon the *Tense* of the Verb, how that varies too in the parts of the Proposition: The Judgments Are in the Earth, and the Inhabitants Will learn —— (So the Vulgar Latin & the English:) 'Tis still *per verba de futuro*. For we list not to hand-fast our selves to God Almighty, to make our selves over to him by present Deed of Gift; but would fain, forsooth, bequeath our selves to him a Legacy in our last Will and Testament. Ay but *In necessitatibus nemo Liberalis*: 'Tis not a free or a noble Donation, which we bestow, when we can keep it no longer our selves: For such a Bequest we may thank Death, rather than the Testator, saith S. Chrysostome. But we are all Clinicks in this point; we would fain have a Baptism in Reserve, a Wash for all our Sins, when we cannot possibly commit them any more. Like Felix the unjust Governour, when S. Paul reasons of Righteousness, our Heads begin to ache, and presently we adjourn with, *Go thy way for this time*; Καὶ οὐδὲ μεταλαβόντες, (as he pretended) when we have time and Opportunity, and convenient Leisure (which we read not, that he ever found) in plain English, when we have nothing else to do, or can do nothing else, then wee'll take forth this Lesson; ---Learn

τῷ θανάτῳ  
χρίσται, ὡς  
Rom. xviii.  
in Ephes.

Acts xxiv.  
25.

Righteousness, as *Cato* did *Greek*, *Jam Septuagenarius*, just when we are a dying; — Begin then to con our part, when we are ready to be hift off the Stage, and Death is now pulling off our properties. But take we heed in time: He may prove a false Prophet, that promiseth himself to *die the Death of the Righteous*, when he hath lov'd, and pursu'd the Ways, and Wages of *Unrighteousness* all his life long: Who thinks if he can but shape the last faint Breath he draws into a formal pretence of forgiving all the World, and a sly desire of being forgiven; Upon these two hangs the whole stress of his Righteousness, he goes out of God's School upon fair terms, and thinks to render a plausible Account of himself. No no; the great Lesson of the Text is harder and deeper than so: 'Tis that we must sweat for, 'tis that we may bleed for: 'Tis all that *Adam* lost, and All that *Christ* came to recover: 'Tis the Business of our whole life, and 'tis desperate Folly and Madness to defer to learn it till Death, when God now calls us to account for it. Though the Verb in some Versions be future (as I said) yet still 'tis *Discent Habitatores*, we must learn it while we dwell here in the World, and who can secure us that beyond the next moment? When once we remove hence, there's no School beyond: The Platonick *Eruditorum* in *ORIGEN* (a place under Ground, I know not where, in which separated Souls are suppos'd to learn what they mist of, or neglected here) as very a Fable as the Platonick Purgatory. As *there is no Work, nor Labour; so no Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave*. The Schools are all in this World: All beyond is Prison, and Dungeon, and place of Torment, for such as learn not their Duty here; Fire without Light, and utter Darkness.

Ecclef. ix.  
10.

3. Again, *They did learn* (so the *Syriac*, and the Interlinear *Latia*) *when thy Judgments were in the Earth*: For there is an *Ellipsis* in the Original of the former clause, and the Verb Substantive may be supplied either way, when thy Judgments *Are* or *Were* in the Earth: And the Conjunction may seem to stand fair for the later *כִּאֲשֶׁר* in *quantum*, or *juxta*.

*juxta quod*; וְלִי (as R. David glosseth it) *qua mensura, aut modo*; and so the Syriac, *Qualia Judicia, talem Justitiam dedicerunt*: So much Judgment, so much Justice; Righteousness they *did* learn, just while God's Rod was over them, and no longer. Thus while God's Plagues lay heavy upon Pharaoh, even that stiff neck bow'd, and that hard heart was softned; As Iron in a quick Fire relents and melts; but take it out of the Furnace, and it grows hard again, nay worse, Churlish and Unmalleable: And so he, *When he saw that there was Respite*, saith the Text, or a breathing time, *He hardened his Heart*, Ex. viii. 15. And do not we all the same? Like teeming Women, while the pangs are upon us, *we have sorrow*; when some great Affliction gives us a smart Visit, strikes home, and deep, we seem to be a little sensible Ay but the Throws once over, *ἐκ τῆς μνησθῆναι*, saith our Lord, the Woman remembers them no more; and so we, *If but for a little space Grace be shewed us, if God gives us but a little Respite in our Bondage*, like Israel newly returned from Babel, *we straight forget his Commandments*; which made the good Ezra asham'd and blush to lift up his Face to Heaven; Ezra, Cap. ix. Vers. 8, 10.

Happy We, if, as Pliny adviseth his friend Maximus, *Tales Lib. 7. Ep. esse sani perseveremus, quales futuros profitemur infirmi*; if we continue such in Health, as we promise to be upon our sick-beds. But alas! *Convalluit; Mansit, ut ante*. How few with David pay the Vows which they spake with their Mouths, when they were in trouble? Do not the engagements on the sick-bed vanish, like the Dreams of the sick, forgotten, as if they had never been? I appeal to your own Bosoms; though affected at first with this late dismal Accident, doth it not prove to you a nine-days Wonder, and your Thoughts though much startled at first, by degrees reconcile to it? Do not your Devotions begin to grow cold with the Fires; rak'd up, like those dying sparks in dead Ashes, and buried in the Dust; — *Ignes suppositi Cineri doloso?* Just as our Prophet states it here, *While thy Judgments were upon them, they learn'd*; But as it follows immediately, *Fiat Gra-*

Verf. 10. *tia Impio, Let Favour be shew'd to the Wicked, the least Intermission or kind Interval, and he will not learn Righteousness,* saith the Text expresly; he soon lays by his Book, and gives over. But

4. Lastly, What is it that we learn? or, to what good end or purpose? The *Chaldee Paraphrast* interposeth here a very Material and Operative word, *Discent operari, they will learn למעבד to do, or to work Righteousness.* And this Addition shews us another of our Defects; cuts off, I fear, above half the Roll of our Learners at once. We live (as I said) in a learned Age: But in all this Croud and Throng of Learners, how few put themselves in good earnest into God's School? And of them that do, how much fewer yet take forth their Lesson aright? — Learn any thing else they will, but not Righteousness; and if that, any thing, but to do it? But this is not *ὀρθῶς διαιρεῖν, rightly to divide*; this is to mangle the Text, and to saw *Isaiah* alunder again. Would learning or talking, or pretending serve the turn, We might find Righteousness enough in the World: We can define it, and distinguish it, Criticize upon the Word, & dispute of the Thing without end: we stuff our Heads with the Notion, and tip our Tongues with the Language, and fill the World with our pretences to it: But *Little Children*, saith *S. John*, (O ye World of Learners) *Be not deceived, (Let no Man seduce you into this picce of Gnosticism, as if to learn, or to know, were sufficient; No,) ὁ πρῶτος, He that Doth Righteousness, he is Righteous. Non fortia loquimur, sed vivimus,* saith *S. Cyprian*; The life of Religion is Doing. What we know, we must practice too; *Whereto we have already attained, we must walk in it*, saith the Apostle. They, that follow'd Christ, were first indeed call'd *Disciples*, that is, Learners, (for there we must begin; ) But they soon after commenc'd Christians at *Antioch*, Anointed to Action, as the word implies; and this Name sticks by them still, as the more essential. Their Oyl must not be spent all in the Lamp, *In Schola Sapientiae*, that they may shine by Knowledge; they must do their Exercises too *In Gymnasio Justitiae*, be anointed to the *Agon*,  
and

1 Joh. iii.  
7.

Phil. iii. 16.

Act. xi. 26.

and to the Combat (as the Champions of old;) and if they expect the Crown of Righteousness, must not only learn Righteousness, but learn to do it.

And therefore (to shut up All, and to enforce it a little upon such Topicks; as the Text, and the sad Face of things amongst us suggest;) Let us no longer trifle with God Almighty, now we find to our cost, that He is in good earnest with us. *Be not deceived; God, I'me sure, is not mock'd.* 'Tis not our fasting, and looking demure a little, and hanging down the Head, like a Bull-rush for a Day; 'Tis not a few Grimaces of sorrow, a sad word or two, or a weeping Eye will serve the turn: — Our Hearts must bleed too, our Souls must be afflicted, and mourn for our old Unrighteousnesses, and forsake them too, and renounce them all for ever; and yet further, take forth new Lessons of Righteousness in all holy Conversations and Godlineesses, as S. Peter <sup>2 Pet. iii.</sup> speaks; even in all the instances of Piety, and Justice, and <sup>11.</sup> Charity, ye heard of even now, or all this holy Discipline of God is lost, and spent in vain upon us. For *this is all the* <sup>Cap. xxvii.</sup> *Fruit, saith our Prophet, to take away sin: If that remain* <sup>9.</sup> still in us, Adversity is a bitter Cup indeed. To keep our sins, and hold them fast, even when God's Judgments are upon us for them, this is with *Copronymus*, to pollute the Fountain that should wash us, to defile the salutary Waters of Affliction, to prophane the holy Fires of God's Furnace, and to pass through the Fire to *Moloch*, to some reigning and domineering Sin, some Tyrant-lust, or Mistress-passion. Correction without Instruction, this is the Scourge of Asses, not the Discipline of Men, nor the Rod of the Sons of Men. To suffer much, and not to be at all the better for it, 'tis certainly one of the saddest portions that can befall us in this World; if not the fore-boding and prognostick of a far sadder yet to come, the very beginnings of Hell here, the Fore-tasts of that Cup of Bitterness, of which the Damned suck out the Dreggs.

And wilt thou after all this hide the sweet Morsel under thy



thy Tongue, when thou sensibly perceiv'st it already turning into the Gall of Asps? — Still long for the delicious portion, consecrated and snatch it greedily from God's Altars, though thou see'st thy Fingers burn, and thy Nest on fire with it? — Still retain the old Complacence in thy sparkling Cup, though thou feel'st it already biting like a Serpent, and stinging like an Adder? — say still, *Stolen Waters are sweet*, though like those bitter Ones of Jealousie, thou perceiv'st them carry a Curse along with them into thy very Bowels?

Prov. ix. 17. Dare we thus provoke the Lord to Jealousie? Are we stronger than He? Gird up now thy loyns like a Man, thou stoutest, and gallantest of the Sons of Earth. Hast thou an Arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a Voice like him? Wilt thou set the Briers and Thorns of the Wilderness against him in Battel-Ar-ray? or canst thou dwell with everlasting Burnings? Or despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance; not knowing (refusing to know) that the Long-suffering of our Lord is Salvation, and that his Goodness leadeth thee to Repentance?

1 Cor. x. 22. Job xxviii. 3. Job xli. 9. Isai. xxxiii. 14. Rom. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 15. If not, know assuredly, that thy Hardness and Impenitent Heart, do but treasure up for thee, yet a fiercer, and a more insupportable Wrath.

And therefore let us not flatter our selves, nor think that God hath now emptied his Quiver, and spent all his Artillery upon us; Let us not come forth delicately with the foolish Agag, saying, *Surely the Bitterness of Death is past*: No, the Dregs of the Cup of Fury are still behind; God grant we be not forc'd at last to drink them, and suck them up. Great Plagues remain for the ungodly, saith the Psalmist. *Vae unum abiit*; Ecce duo veniunt. One Wo is past, but behold there come two Woes more; for the rest of Men that were not kill'd by the former Plagues, repented not, Apoc. ix. 12. 20. When God's Rods and his Ferulae (the Discipline of Children) are condemn'd, he hath a lash of Scorpions to scourge the obstinate. When the ten dreadful Plagues are spent all upon a stubborn Egypt without effect, there's a Red Sea yet in Reserve, that at last swallows all: And if our present Afflictions reform us not, that we sin no more; take we heed, lest yet a worse



a worse thing befall us. Remember, that when the Touch of God's little Finger did not terrifie us, he soon made us feel the stroak of his heavy hand. If the more benign, and benedict Medicines will not work, nor stir us at all, he can prepare us a rougher *Receipt*, or a stronger *Dose*; retriue and bring back his former Judgments in a sharper Degree, or else send upon us new ones, which we never dream of.

The Devil of Rebellion and Disobedience, which not long since possiess the Nation, rent and tore it till it som'd again, and pin'd away in lingring Consumptions; that cast it oft times into the Fire, and oft times into the Water (calamities of all sorts) to destroy it; is now through God's Mercies cast out, and we seem to sit quiet, and sober at the Feet of our Deliverer, cloath'd, and in our right Minds again. But yet this *ill* Spirit, this restless Fury (this unquiet and dreadful *Alastor*, the eldest Son of *Nemesis*, and heir apparent to all the Terrors and Mischiefs of his Mother) walks about day and night, seeking Rest, and finds none; and he saith in his heart, I will return some time or other to my House from whence I came out. Oh let us take heed of provoking that God, who alone chains up his Fury, least for our Sins he permit him to return once more, with seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and so our last Estate prove worse than the former.

The Sword of the Angel of Death, which the last year cut down almost a hundred thousand of us, may seem to have been glutted with our Blood, and to have put up it self into the Scabbard. *Quiesce & sile*, as the Prophet speaks: Jer. xlvii. God grant it may rest here, and be still. But, as it follows <sup>6.</sup> there, *How can it be quiet, if the Lord give it a new Commission against us?* Methinks I see the Hand still upon the Guard, and unless we prevent it by our speedy Repentance, it may quickly be drawn again more terrible than ever, new furnished, and whetted with the keener edge, and point, our wretched Ingratitude must needs have given it. The Sun of Righteousness was ready to rise upon us, with healing in his Wings, to clear our Heaven again, and to scatter the

*Diamirbr.  
de peste  
Noviomag.*

*Ex. ix. 8, 9.*

Cloud of the last years unhealthiness. But yet, methinks, this slow-moving Cloud hangs still o're our Heads, hovers yet in view, with God knows how many Plagues and Deaths in the Bosome of it: and without our serious Amendment we have no Rainbow to assure us, that we shall not again be drencht in that horrible Tempest. Though the best Naturalists say, *That great publick Fires are a proper Remedy for the Plague*, Yet God, if he be angry, can send a rustling Wind into the very Ashes of our City, blow them into the Air, and turn them as those of the *Egyptian* Furnace, into a Blain, and a Botch, and a Plague-fore upon us.

Nay even out of those dead Ashes, can He raise yet a fiercer Flame, to consume what still remains. *As the Lightning comes out of the East*, saith our Lord, *and shineth even unto the West, so shall my coming be*, (*sc.* to destroy Jerusalem, ) *and wherever the Carcase is, will the Eagles be gathered together*, Matth. xxiv. Fire is the Eagle in Nature; nothing in the Elementary World mounts so high to its place, and stoops so low to its prey: the two properties God himself ascribes to that Bird, *Job xxxix 27, 30.* And if we still refuse obstinately to be gathered, like Chickens under our Lord's Wing, he can again let loose this Bird of Prey, this Eagle of Heaven upon us; and from the East, where it began before, flie it home like Lightning *εως δυσμῶν*, even to the utmost West, to seize, and to devour where ever there is the least Quarry remaining.

Or if this move us not, let us remember that we have another City upon the Waters, a floating Town of moveable Forts and Castles, the Walls and Bulwarks of the Nation; stronger than those of Brass, the Fable speaks of. As we desire that God would ever *fill their Sails with prosperous Gales, & still bring them home with Honor and Victory, and good Success*, Let us take heed that we fight not against them too. Our Sin, like a Talent of Lead, may sink them to the Bottom; our Lusts, and Passions, and Animosities may fire them; our Drunkenness, and deep Excesses may drown them; our Vollics of Oaths and Blasphemies may pierce them;

them; nay, our Seditious Murmurings, and Privy Whispers may blow them over. For God is *Piorum Rupes*, *Reorum Scopulus*; a Rock to found the Just upon, but a Shelf to shipwrack, and confound the Unrighteous.

And yet all these are but the common Roads, and ordinary Instances of God's Displeasures: But he hath also, besides, and beyond all these, unknown *Treasures of Wrath*, vast stores of hidden Judgments (for *who knows the Power*, or the extent of his Anger?) laid up in those secret Magazines, where his Judgments are, when they are not in the Earth, reserv'd as his dreadful Artillery against the time of trouble, against the day of Battel and War, as he speaks himself, *Job xxxviii. 23.* Oh let us take heed of *treasuring up to our selves Wrath against that day of Wrath, and the Revelation of his Righteous Judgments.* Pl. xc. ii.

And now what shall I say more, if all that hath been said hitherto, prove ineffectual? The Text affords yet one Expedient as the *Chaldee* Paraphrast may seem to have understood it: *Because thy Judgment*, saith he (not מִיָּמִין as in the *Hebrew*, but מִיָּמִין or מִיָּמִין as the *Jews* call it, and *S. Jude* from them, *The Judgment of the great Day*) because that Judgment, though not as yet in the Earth, is yet fixt, and appointed, and prepared for all the Earth כָּל הָאָרֶץ in the *Hebrew* it self too, for rather than in the Earth) therefore most certainly, if at all, or for any thing, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness. כָּמָה  
רִיבֵיךָ  
תִּקְיוֹ  
&c.  
Jude 6.

But if they put far from them this evil day too, as if they had made a Covenant with Death and with Hell; if they finally refuse to come under God's Discipline, and to take forth to themselves Lessons of Righteousness here, they shall then be made themselves great Lessons, and dreadful examples of God's Righteousness to all the World. If they will not glorifie God in these Fires, as they ought, nor walk in the light of them; let them remember that there are Fires without Light, where none glorifie him, but by suffering the Eternal Vengeance of their Sins. There must they learn by saddest experience, who obstinately refuse the more gainful

ful Method, ὅτι φοβερόν ἐμπροσθεν, That 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of a living God. For our enemies here must die, and our storms at last blow over, and our Fires, you see, though never so great, in time go out and vanish: But God lives; hath a Worm too, that dies not (for those that live not as they ought) and a fire that is not quenched: The *Babylonian* Furnace, seven times hotter than usual, a cool walk to that; all our *Vulcans* and *Etnas*, our *Heclæ* and *Andes* faint types and shadows of it; the great Conflagration, we so lately trembled at, and still bewail, but a spark to that infernal *Tophet*, but a painted Fire to that dreadful *Mongibel*; even *Everlasting Burnings*. From which, God of his tender Mercy deliver us All; and give us Grace in this our Day, (the Day of his Judgments) so to learn Righteousness, and so to do it, that at the last, and great Day of Judgment, when he shall come again to Account with us for all our Learning, and for all our Doings, we may through his Mercy receive the Crown of Righteousness, for his sake alone, who so dearly bought it for us, even Jesus Christ the Righteous: To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed by us, and all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, Blessing, Honour, Glory and Power, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*

Μόνῳ Θεῷ δόξα

FINIS.